MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN NEW YORK CITY, JANUARY 16, 1935

The fifth meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1935, was held on January 16, 1935, in the office of John Russell Pope, 542 Fifth Avenue, New York City. The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman,
Mr. Swartwout,
Mr. Clarke,
Mr. Lawrie,
also Mr. H. P. Caemmerer,

Executive Secretary and Administrative Officer.

There was also present by invitation, Mr. William Mitchell Kendall of the firm of McKim, Mead and White, 101 Park Avenue, New York City.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a. m.

1. ELECTION OF MR. MOORE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION: Mr. Swartwout expressed his great delight in the reappointment of Mr. Moore for another term as a member of the Commission of Fine Arts. Likewise all the other members of the Commission rejoiced in his reappointment. Mr. Swartwout felt it very important that Mr. Moore serve on the Commission at this time to help restrain advanced ideas in the fine arts that are now current. Also the problems pending in the plan of development of Washington make it most desirable to have the continued advice of Mr. Moore. The other members of the Commission heartily concurred in this.

Upon motion properly moved and seconded Mr. Moore was re-elected Chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts. Mr. Moore said he was pleased on receiving the re-appointment, particularly when he learned that President Roosevelt had told Mr. Rudolph Forster, his Executive Clerk, that it was not necessary to

bring a memorandum recommending the re-appointment of Mr. Moore to him but to go ahead and order it. Mr. Moore said he has been having several talks with the President recently and that he is much interested in the work of improving and developing the City of Washington.

2. SKETCHES FOR MURAL PAINTINGS, ARCHIVES BUILDING: Under date of January 14, 1935, the following letter was received from the Office of the Supervising Architect, submitting Mr. Faulkner's revised sketches for the mural paintings for the Archives Building:

The Chairman,
The Committee on Fine Arts,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

There are submitted herewith two photographs of Mr. Barry Faulkner's sketches for the proposed murals for the new National Archives Building, Washington, D. C. These sketches have just been received through the office of John Russell Pope, Architect for this building, and embody changes as a result of suggestions advanced during a discussion of the subject at the last meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts.

Your further comment and advice are requested.

Respectfully,
(Signed) I. W. Stone,
Acting Supervising Architect.

The Commission noted that on each of the sketches, namely, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, Mr. Faulkner had indicated standards of the colonies instead of the sculptural figures shown in the previous sketches.

Mr. Savage sent the following comment approving these revised sketches:

Hollywood, Florida,
January 5, 1935.

Charles Moore, Chairman,
The Commission of Fine Arts,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Moore:

In view of my inability to be in New York for the next meeting of the Commission I wish to report on one item to come before the meeting.

Photographic copies of Mr. Faulkner's compositions for the Archives Building have just been received by me. They show his studies of the subject to date, embodying the suggestions and ideas developed when Mr. Faulkner was present at our last meeting.

These suggestions and other elements and changes put into the work by Mr. Faulkner have very effectively carried the work to a point where the wishes of the Commission seem to have been met. Mr. Faulkner feels that the various suggestions have been helpful, enlarged the scope of the subject treated and I think they have saved time. It is my impression that his studies can be approved to date by the Commission at this time. The approval would enable him to proceed with completed final studies at larger scale.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) Eugene Savage.

Each of the paintings is to be 34 feet long and 14 feet high. Mr. Eggers of the office of John Russell Pope was asked about the marble frames for the paintings, and he replied that the frames are of what is known as companio rose marble, which had been given a honed finish. Mr. Swartwout said the frames were inspected at the December meeting of the Commission and the members thought they looked very well and would be appropriate for these paintings.

As to the paintings, the suggestion was made that the figure of Washington should be a little more animated. The sketches were approved and the Supervising Architect informed accordingly. (Exhibit A)

Mr. Faulkner was asked as to the color scheme for the paintings and he said he was making a study of this subject at the present time. He will submit sketches in color in the near future.

3. PLAN FOR UNION SQUARE: Captain C. Howard, representing Mr. F. L. Olmsted, Jr., of Brookline, Massachusetts, was present to consider with the Commission a plan for Union Square and more particularly to discuss the treatment of the area adjacent to the Grant Memorial. A plan was also presented by Malcolm Kirkpatrick, landscape architect, in behalf of the National Park Service, for which he used as a basis a sketch prepared by Mr. Clarke at the December meeting of the Commission. The Commission considered these plans in connection with the plan for the Mall.

It was noted on this Mall plan that the paths parallel and outside of the Mall Roads, had been reduced to a width of nine feet. These walks will be adjacent to the 30-foot Mall drives and between the drive and walk there will be an 8-foot grass space. Mr. Clarke said that the walk should not be built of concrete as it gives a harsh and glaring color; he recommended the use of hexagonal asphalt blocks, which would give the dark colored surface desired. Paths made of such blocks are in Central Park along Fifth Avenue, and some of them in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, were put in sixty years ago and are still good.

The paths carried into the Union Square area should also be surfaced with asphalt blocks--except as otherwise noted.

The area adjacent to the Grant Memorial was then carefully considered. It was agreed that this area should be paved with stone; Mr. Swartwout suggested using blue stone to contrast with the white Vermont marble pedestal of the memorial. There is to be low planting at each end of the monument. It was thought that the paved plaza would give greater emphasis to Union Square by contrasting with the Mall development proper and the Capitol Grounds.

Mr. Lawrie suggested simplifying the form of the design of the pavement west of the monument so as to make a rather straight line. It was decided that the main entrance to Union Square and the Monument should be from the center on the east side and that the openings on a line with the Cavalry and Artillery Groups should be closed. The question was raised whether or not the walks in the Union Square area could be omitted. Captain Howard said that a walk is there now and appears to be used although by no great number of people. The Secretary stated that the walk is used by those going from the Grant to the Meade Memorial and vice versa. Also the central drives will lead up to the island to facilitate traffic.

A discussion followed as to the character of the hexagonal blocks. Mr. Clarke said the blocks are made of compressed asphaltic concrete. The paths should have a heavy flush metal edge which should be held down by metal stakes.

In general the Commission regarded portions of Mr. Olmsted's Plans 556 A and 556 B acceptable. The various suggestions of the Commission are to be embodied into a single plan, which Captain Howard said he would have done, and would resubmit to the Commission.

Mr. Kirkpatrick said it was rather difficult to figure on the exact location of the Grant Monument with reference to the central axis of the Mall. Mr. Moore replied that this is due to the fact that the dome of the Capitol is 10 feet off the center of the building.

Mr. Clarke said he would be in Washington next Saturday, Sunday and Monday and would be pleased to go to Union Square with Professor Hubbard of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and consider the project further. (Exhibit B)

(The plan for Union Square except that portion of the Capitol Grounds itself, which is subject to further legislation, was officially approved by the Congressional Commission on Enlarging the Capitol Grounds, Vice President Garner Chairman, at a meeting at the Capitol, held on January 23, 1935.)

4. REPORT ON GENERAL ARTEMAS WARD STATUE: The Secretary stated that it was expected that Mr. Leonard Crunelle, sculptor, of the General Artemas Ward Statue, would have a small scale model ready for this meeting of the Commission. However, a telegram was received from Mr. Crunelle, advising that the model was not ready at this time.

5. CONNECTICUT TERCENTENARY COIN: The Secretary stated that he had been in communication with the Office of the Director of the Mint regarding the models for the Connecticut Tercentenary Coin by Mr. Henry G. Kreis. Mr. Kreis was to have made some changes in the model, recommended by the Commission, but the Mint had not received the revised models to date. Mr. Lawrie said that Mr. Kreis was doubtless in California at this time assisting Mr. Arthur Brown in the pediment sculpture for the Labor Department Building.

Thereupon a letter was received from Mr. Samuel H. Fisher, Chairman of the Connecticut Tercentenary Commission, stating that the changes in the models have been made and that photographs of the revised models are being sent to the Mint. The letter also confirmed Mr. Lawrie's statement as to Mr. Kreis.

6. TERRA COTTA PANELS FOR THE AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT BUILDING: Mr. Julian Rayford appeared before the Commission with revised sketches for terra cotta panels which have been proposed for a location at the entrance of the Extensible Building of the Agriculture Department on the south side of Independence Avenue.

Mr. Moore received the following letter from Mr. C. Law Watkins of the Public Works of Art Committee, urging favorable action by the Commission as to the sketches:

January 15, 1935.

Mr. Charles Moore,
Chairman, Fine Arts Commission,
Care John Russell Pope, Esq.,
542 Fifth Avenue,
New York City.

Dear Sir:

I regret that I cannot appear personally to advocate the proposed terra cotta decorations of Julian Lee Rayford. I was fortunate enough to be able to discuss the matter today with Mr. Lee Lawrie. He suggested that I make a brief statement in writing to the PWAP Committee.

Secretary Wallace and Assistant Secretary Tugwell and our Committee are very anxious to see Rayford's decoration approved for installation at the NE entrance of the office building of the Department of Agriculture, as shown in Rayford's sketch. The narrow street between this facade and the main building makes us feel that the work of decoration will not obviously clash with the classic note in the architecture.

After my talk with Mr. Lawrie, in which both of us expressed ourselves unofficially, I can see that it is not likely that the commission will approve two styles of decoration on the same facade. Mr. Lawrie voiced the thought that the Rayford decorations might be very appropriate for some Government building in the Middle West, but we in Washington feel that these decorations are essentially American and have more than sectional interest. Consequently we believe they should be installed in the National Capital.

If it is not possible to secure approval of the Rayford decorationson the facade of the office building, we earnestly seek approval of their installation either in the court of the main building of the Department of Agriculture, or in an equally favorable indoor location. The court itself would be a most appropriate place because of its informal outdoor atmosphere. It is filled with large plants; faced with light tan brick, and the structural steel supporting the skylight is much in evidence. The brilliant color of the Rayford panels in that neutral garden-like setting would be most effective.

I cannot stress too greatly the keenness of the desire of the Department of Agriculture and the PWAP Committee of Region Number Four to have approval of the Rayford project in a suitable place in the City of Washington.

Yours respectfully,
(Signed) C. Law Watkins
For the PWAP Committee
Region Number Four

Mr. Rayford explained the sketches, saying that he had studied them for thirteen months and that it was his desire to present American folklore in stone. The characters particularly to be portrayed are Paul Bunyan, a Canadian hunter, David Crockett, a pioneer of the days of the Alamo, the old Circuit Rider, Mark Twain as a pioneer boat builder, and Uncle Remus and Negro Spirituals. Also he wishes to portray Indian mythology, particularly from the Aztec and Southwestern Indians. Cornstalks were shown between the figures. Mr. Rayford said that Secretary Wallace and Dr. Tugwell are in favor of the sketches and would like to see the work executed.

Mr. Rayford said that if these are not considered appropriate for the exterior of the building he would like to have them placed in the court of the Administration Building of the Agriculture Department. Before this could be done, however, the large Agriculture Department World War Memorial by Mr. John Flanagan, which is of white Cararra marble, would have to be removed. Mr. Rayford wanted to know whether the Commission would agree to its removal.

The Commission inspected the sketches. Mr. Lawrie said that Mr. Watkins had called on him yesterday about the matter but he had refrained from giving an opinion as to the sketches. Mr. Lawrie said he had been giving the matter careful thought and was convinced that it would be inappropriate to place these terra cotta panels in Washington. He said further: "I am sympathetic with

the type of design, being a modern sculptor, but I think it is as strange to put this in Washington as it would be to put a Greek statue on the Nebraska State Capitol". Mr. Lawrie felt that if Mr. Rayford keeps up his study of the subject he would bring his sketches to a point of excellence. Mr. Lawrie thought it would be better to place these panels on some building out West.

Mr. Swartwout was particularly concerned about the scale of the drawings and questioned Mr. Rayford concerning this matter. Mr. Swartwout pointed out that this was an architectural problem. He asked Mr. Rayford as to the scale of his drawings and Mr. Rayford seemed to be rather in doubt as to what the scale was but he thought that they had been drawn to the scale of a quarter of an inch to the foot. According to this the figures would be about six feet high.

Mr. Swartwout said to Mr. Rayford: "When you come to the exterior of a building it becomes an architectural problem and not a decorative problem--you may not recognize this. There are also questions of color, of course, to be considered with the design. As a general rule, some people have felt that they like color but we are not in a climate where much color on buildings is used. I do not think the Commission would want to do anything that would tend to suggest that it is desirable to use color on a building. Only occasionly the Commission have used a little color. It is a question whether this is a proper thing on a building and I am sure it is not the proper thing to do in Washington.

Mr. Rayford said he had an architect reproduce the facade of the extensible building and that he simply inserted his designs for the panels. Mr. Swartwout impressed upon Mr. Rayford the importance of having his drawings executed according to scale as to do otherwise would ruin the appearance of the building.

Mr. Rayford was anxious to have a decision at once, saying that the Public Works of Art Committee wants to know immediately whether his sketches will be accepted so that his services will be retained. Mr. Rayford said he is the only artist still on the relief rolls of the Public Works of Art. The Secretary said that it is customary to allow the Commission time to consider a project of this character and that he should leave the sketches with the Commission and a report would be sent to him in a few days.

Mr. Rayford then left the meeting, and the Commission considered the sketches further. Mr. Swartwout said that the sketches are badly drawn and it seemed clear to him that Mr. Rayford does not understand the architectural problem included in the execution of these panels. The figures were distorted as in cartoons. Mr. Swartwout also said that he was afraid that to allow these terra cotta panels in Washington on public buildings would create a very bad precedent. All the other members agreed with Mr. Swartwout in this matter. Mr. Lawrie believed that these decorations would be ill adapted to the architecture of the building. If the panels are to be executed, he thought they should be placed on a building out West and the other members of the Commission concurred in this. Mr. Moore considered the figures to be caricatures and felt certain that the people would resent such a bad portrayal, for example, of Mark Twain.

Thereupon the matter was brought to the attention of Mr. Louis Simon, Supervising Architect, whose office designed the building, and he was asked for his opinion about it. (Exhibit C. see also C-1)

7. PLANS FOR THE GREAT ENTRANCE TO ARLINGTON: Mr. Malcolm Kirkpatrick, landscape architect of the National Park Service, submitted in behalf of the

Park Service drawings Nos. NCP 1537 and 1544A. The Commission noted from these plans that the National Park Service is carrying out the suggestions of the Commission of Fine Arts as to rearranging curbs and other features of the Great Plaza.

Mr. Kirkpatrick reported that the Public Works Administration has disapproved taking $25,000 out of the allotment for a hedge; instead the Public Works Administration wants this money to be spent on completing the sculptural ornaments for the Great Plaza, including also a fountain at the entrance and the bronze gates. Contracts for this work have been let by the National Park Service and in this the National Park Service is cooperating with Mr. Kendall of the office of McKim, Mead and White.

The Commission felt that in revising the design of the central panel of the Great Plaza the appearance of it had been improved considerably. The sidewalks will be 15 feet wide.

The Commission recommended a darker material for the concrete sidewalks adjacent to the Memorial Avenue.

Mr. Clarke called particular attention to the planting plan and recommended that vines adjacent to the sidewalk be omitted. With this suggestion, both plans were approved.

8. PLAN FOR PINEY BRANCH ROAD UNDERPASS: Mr. Kirkpatrick submitted a plan for the Piney Branch Road Underpass, which was inspected by Mr. Clarke and upon his recommendation, was approved.

9. MERIDIAN HILL PARK LIGHTING: Mr. Moore said that it would be very desirable to bring down the Armillary Sphere, which is being given to the Government and place it in the Lower Garden of Meridian Hill Park, but that the matter has been held in abeyance pending the installation of proper light-

ing for the Lower Garden. The Commission considered the matter and suggested that the Millet lamp post be used. Mr. C. C. Castello of the National Park Service, who has this matter in charge, was present, and said that the National Park Service is preparing estimates for the lighting of the entire area of Meridian Hill Park; however, it was admitted that a number of the Millet lamp posts could be installed immediately in that area so that the Armillary Sphere could be set up. The Commission disapproved installing flood lights.

In connection with the Meridian Hill Park development, attention was called to the need of preparing a planting plan for the statue of Dante and also for the statue "Serenity" in the Upper Garden.

10. LABORATORY BUILDING, AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF PHARMACY: Mr. Otto R. Eggers of the office of John Russell Pope, submitted a sketch for the proposed laboratory building of the American Institute of Pharmacy, to be built on the north side of the present building along C Street. In front of the building would be a triangular grass plot so that this building would also face New York Avenue at the corner of 23rd Street.

The building was designed in the classical order, showing a central unit with pediment and wings for future expansion. Mr. Eggers also exhibited a plot plan showing the location of the building more clearly and also the property that will have to be acquired. The proposed building when completed will be 256 feet in length on C Street. The wings will extend about 88 feet along 22nd and 23rd Streets.

The sketches were given particular attention by Mr. Swartwout, who was very well pleased with them. Upon his recommendation the Commission approved

the plans and a report was sent to Dr. E. F. Kelly, Secretary of the American Pharmaceutical Association. (Exhibit D)

Mr. Moore said that Dr. Kelly is expecting the return of Dr. Wellcome from England to this country in the near future. Dr. Wellcome is sponsoring the erection of the building on the condition that the Government will make the site available. Dr. Kelly will take up the question of securing the necessary legislation from Congress as soon as Dr. Wellcome approves these plans.

11. LANE MEMORIAL FLAGPOLE: Mr. Eggers submitted revised sketches for the Lane Memorial Flagpole to be built at Hains Point, which is the south end of East Potomac Park. The Commission expressed preference for the sketch showing the flagpole at the farthest end of East Potomac Park. The flagpole is to be 150 feet high. It is not expected, however, that it will be erected for several years.

The Commission adjourned at 4:00 p. m. to meet in Washington on Saturday, February 23.

C O P Y

January 21, 1935.

Dear Mr. Simon:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting in the Office of John Russell Pope, architect, New York City, on January 16, 1935, considered the progress photographs submitted by the Office of the Supervising Architect on January 14, of sketches by Mr. Barry Faulkner for the two mural paintings to be entitled "The Declaration of Independence" and "The Constituti on" for the National Archives Building.

Mr. Faulkner was present at the meeting and the Commission congratulated him on the progress of his work. Mr. Faulkner will now proceed with the study of the color scheme of the paintings in consultation with this Commission.

The sketches were approved.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully, yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. Louis A. Simon,
Supervising Architect,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT A

C O P Y

January 21, 1935.

Dear Capt. Howard:

Yesterday Mr. Moore, Mr. Gilmore D. Clarke and Professor Hubbard considered your revised plan of January 17, 1934, 556 C, for Walks and Pavement at the Grant Memorial, in Union Square, at the site. The plan was agreed to with the exception of the omission of the planting on the east side, suggesting grass instead of shrubbery.

The plan is herewith returned.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) H. P. Caemmerer,

Secretary.

P. S. I enclose also the statement for the Minutes of the Meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts, held in New York City on January 16, 1935, pertaining to Union Square. This has Mr. Clarke's approval.

H. P. C.

Capt. C. Howard,
c/o Mr. F. L. Olmsted,
Brookline, Massachusetts.

EXHIBIT B

C O P Y

January 25, 1935.

Dear Mr. Simon:

Mr. C. Law Watkins for the P. W. A. P. Committee, Region No. 4, submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts at its meeting in New York City on January 16, 1935, certain proposed terra cotta decorations designed by Julian Lee Rayford to be placed about the entrances of the Extensible Building of the Agriculture Department and to face Independence Avenue. I understand that you are familiar with these sketches.

To the Commission of Fine Arts the sketches seem ill adapted to the architectural design of the building. The Commission would be pleased to have your opinion on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Hon. Louis Simon,
Supervising Architect,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT C

DEPT. AGRICULTURE

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON

PROCUREMENT DIVISION
PUBLIC WORKS BRANCH

IN REPLYING QUOTE THE ABOVE SUBJECT, BUILDING, AND THESE LETTERS PW-SA

January 29, 1935.

JAN 1935

Mr. Charles Moore,
Chairman,
The Commission of Fine Arts,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Moore:

I have your letter of January 25, referring to certain terra cotta decorations which it has been suggested would be placed about the entrance of the South Building, Department of Agriculture, this City.

If these decorations are the same as those for which I saw sketches which Mr. Rayford showed me some months ago, they are in my opinion unsuitable for use on the exterior of the building in question.

Very truly yours,

Supervising Architect.

EXHIBIT C-1

C O P Y

January 19, 1935.

Dear Dr. Kelly:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting in the office of John Russell Pope, New York City, on January 16, 1935, were pleased to consider the sketches made by him for the proposed laboratory building of the American Institute of Pharmacy. In the absence of Mr. Pope from the city, the Commission considered the sketches with Mr. Otto Eggers of his office.

The Commission of Fine Arts unanimously approved the design.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Dr. E. F. Kelly, Secretary,
American Pharmaceutical Association,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT D